



# Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

## CAS Newsletter

## October 2024

### Upcoming services and events

**Wednesday, October 2 at 7:00 PM:** Erev Rosh HaShanah at Berkshire South Community Center

**Thursday, October 3 at 10:00 AM:** Rosh HaShanah Morning Service at Berkshire South Community Center

**Saturday, October 5 at 10:00:** Shabbat Shuvah at the synagogue on North Street

**Friday, October 11 at 7:00 PM:** Kol Nidrei Service at Berkshire South Community Center

**Saturday, October 12 at 10:00 AM:** Yom Kippur, including Yizkor; Neilah afternoon service, break fast  
at Berkshire South Community Center

**Wednesday, October 16 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah via Zoom

**Monday, October 21 at 12:00 PM:** Memoir Workshop via Zoom  
at 5:00 PM: October Board Meeting via Zoom  
at 7:00 PM: Photography Workshop via Zoom

**Wednesday, October 23 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah via Zoom

**Wednesday, October 30 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah via Zoom

### This month's newsletter features:

**The High Holy Days at CAS**

**Café Kehillah honors Rabbi Barbara Cohen**

**Our Annual CAS Yom Kippur Food Drive**

**"An Angle of Forgiveness" by Toby Axelrod**

**Help Decorate Our Sukkah**

**Members password to change**

**October Creative Arts Workshops**

**October Yahrzeits**

**October Donations**

**Community Event**

**Advertisers and Sponsors**

## The High Holy Days at CAS

High Holy Day worship with Congregation Ahavath Sholom, an affiliate of Reconstructing Judaism, is an inclusive experience. Rabbi Barbara Kipnis Cohen creates an atmosphere of intimacy and spiritual connection with the congregation and with the liturgy and music of this awe-filled time. Services will be held (unless otherwise listed) at the Berkshire South Community Center on Crissey Road in Great Barrington, MA.

Registration will be required to attend any of the services listed below. For more information and to register, please go to the CAS website at [www.ahavathsholom.com](http://www.ahavathsholom.com) and click the **green** High Holy Day Registration button.

**There is also a link on the High Holy Day section to list the names of loved ones that you wish to be remembered during the Yizkor service on Yom Kippur.**

We look forward to hearing from you and to spending these meaningful days with you.



### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM: Erev Rosh HaShanah

Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 AM: Rosh HaShanah Morning service

Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM: Shabbat Shuvah, at the synagogue on North Street

Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM: Kol Nidrei Service

Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM: Yom Kippur Service, including Yizkor  
Afternoon Neilah concluding service; break fast

## Café Kehillah honors Rabbi Barbara Cohen

On Wednesday, September 25th, the final session that Rabbi Barbara would host, the Café Kehillah group honored her with a video of past Zoom participant screens, a wonderful series of reminiscences and tributes by the assembled attendants, and a beautiful bouquet of flowers, delivered to her home.



## Our Annual CAS Yom Kippur Food Drive



### Our Annual CAS Yom Kippur Food Drive

We are getting ready for our Yom Kippur Food Drive for the People's Pantry. They greatly value our support. We will provide bags on Rosh HaShanah, and you can bring them to services on Yom Kippur filled up. Last year we had over 500 food items, surpassing the previous year. Let's beat that figure this year!

Please watch your dates on the donated food. They will not accept items if they are expired or are about to expire.



# An Angle of Forgiveness:

## How a granddaughter preserved the memory of her zede the rabbi with a secret photograph

I sinned and the evidence exists. I will ask forgiveness, but first let me testify.

When I sit in a massive synagogue for the High Holy Days this year, I will try to ignore the loudspeaker system and not to see the hundreds of people dressed to the nines, greeting each other for the first time in a year between the lines of "al het" - for the sins we have committed.

(Once, what I thought was a Torah being passed through the aisles turned out to be a woman walking in a dress decked with jangly coins.)

In my mind I revisit the tiny shul of my grandfather, Jacob Axelrod, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

My zede, an Orthodox rabbi, found the job in 1927 by answering an ad in a Jewish newspaper two years after he came to America.

Until 1984, he was the religious leader of Great Barrington's small Jewish community. The shul - a former bakery - had been sold to a Jewish junk dealer (Mr. Broverman) who promised to open a shop there. Instead, to the chagrin of town officials, the little, white, two-story frame house became Ahavas Shalom - Congregation Love of Peace.

Zede was the rabbi, the arbitrator, the kosher butcher and even, for a while, gas station operator.

At Ahavas Shalom there was room for about 100 - a more manageable crowd when it came to controlling gossip between the prayers.

Slam! With a bang of his hand on the lectern, my zede (wearing his white "kittel" and high, white satin yarmulke) would bring all chatter to a halt. Children who had been racing between the aisles screeched to a stop. Friends exchanging news about marriage, babies, divorce, or illness would blush and look down at their prayer books.

The service would continue. My father, Irving, would compete with his younger brother, David, each trying to sing louder than the other. Reading the prayers, I considered that I must have done something terribly wrong this year and even if I did not know what it was I should ask forgiveness. (I've been humbled since.)

My thoughts would wander; I would gaze out the window at the elms in the yard between the shul and my zede's house, or stare as if in a trance at the embroidered velvet curtain hanging over the Torah Ark. The small room was often stifling, and Zede - the most sensitive of weathervanes - detected any open window instantly and would not go on with the service until it was closed. To get air, it became necessary to "take a break" and go into the house for a bite of fluden, the prune layer cake hidden in the "cold room," a bedroom with no radiator.

One had to be back for shofar blowing. Let anyone's soul remain hardened, one blast would soften it up. My zede said he was famous for his shofar blowing in the "Old Country," claiming he could blow two at a time.

"Any shofar they gave me, I was blowin' it like lightning," he once told me. He even earned his first dollars in America when a synagogue "signed me up for Rosh Hashanah, because I came to America just a month before Rosh Hashanah. That's the first \$20 what I got," he said in his heavy Yiddish accent.

Bringing the horn to his lips, he would press two fingers on the left side of his mouth and one on the right. He would close his eyes, adjust his embouchure, give a couple of barely audible sputters, and then let it rip.

In his later years, he gave the responsibility to my cousin Danny Reder, the best of the boys with the ram's horn. Zede kept two shofars in a cupboard under the lectern in the shul, each filled with white vinegar to keep them supple. For a "blowser" with a sore lip, that made the task even harder.

After services, when the last New Year greetings had been exchanged and old friends and neighbors had gone home, we cousins would take turns trying to get a sound out of the shofar. The little shul was filled with strange whines, sneezing sounds and of course the loud, mellifluous blasts that my sister Ruth, a French hornist, could elicit (though as a girl she was not permitted to display her talent during services).

Over the years, the congregation dwindled. The oldsters died or moved away. The younger generation headed for bigger towns and cities. In 1984, my zede officiated over what we knew would be his last Rosh Hashanah service at the shul. He would be retiring. That's when I sinned.

Hidden under my jacket was my new camera, feeling quite a bit heavier than usual. During a break in the service, I slipped into the hallway. On tiptoes, I peered through the little window on the door that led into the sanctuary and, my heart racing, I silently asked forgiveness from family members who might object (according to zede's unique interpretation, photos were

permissible after services but not during). Nobody was watching. I raised the camera above my head and pressed it to the glass and snapped and drew it down. I did it five times. The click of the shutter seemed almost louder than a "tekiyah," the shofar's call.

I snuck back into shul and shared a glance with my cousin Benjy Reder. He returned my look with an even slyer one, and opening his coat pocket, revealed a tape recorder.

One and a half years later, in January 1986, my zede died. The next New Year, Benjy was hired to lead High Holy Day services at a tiny Orthodox shul in Pittsfield, Mass. Wanting to carry on my zede's melodies, Benjy listened to the tapes and practiced.

Almost the entire family came to the service (after negotiating so the women would not have to be in the balcony near the kitchen. We insisted on having our own side of the shul downstairs. I said the one guy who objected could build a wall around himself.) Our presence nearly doubled the congregation, our voices dominated. And we sang it our way, zede's way.

Before the "Hineni" prayer, Benjy put on our zede's white kittle and drew zede's silver-embroidered tallit over his shoulders. Through the Magen-David window about the ark, I saw two doves sitting on a telephone line outside, perfectly framed. I imagined they were the souls of Zede and Bubbe, watching us with some satisfaction.

The view through that other pane I have never developed before, beyond a contact sheet. In each image, within a window frame at a crazy angle, Zede stands in his kittle and hat, and the congregation sits praying or exchanging news. In one photo, an aunt has turned around. She seems to be looking straight at me.



This year, as we sit in the massive synagogue considering the future of our collective and private souls, I will stay close to the bima so I can feel that this is a small and intimate shul, the cantor singing for us and my friend Kym blowing the shofar for us. As my father leans over and sings into my ear zede's old melodies (not minding that he is drowned out by the congregation), I once again will hope to be forgiven.

Toby Axelrod 9/20/1996

Watch the YouTube video (photographed by Van Forsman) of Toby's talk, **Stories My Grandfather, Rabbi Jacob Axelrod, Told Me**, recorded on July 21, 2024, at the Friend's Meeting House:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEcEvJ3Jau8>



## Help decorate our Sukkah



Our annual Sukkah decorating event is scheduled for Sunday, October 13th, at 11:00 AM at the synagogue on North Street. Please bring decorations, a snack, and a folding chair for the sukkah. The rain date is Monday, October 14th, at 5:00 PM.

## Members password to change



Photograph by Shubham Dhage for Unsplash

We are changing the password used to access the Members' Page on our website as of October 15th. Each CAS member in good standing will receive the new information via snail mail (the USPS).

## October Creative Arts Workshops

The next Memoir Writing Workshop is scheduled for Monday, October 21st at noon. Shared readings and short writing exercises. Each of these sessions is stand-alone. Please RSVP to Barbara Janoff at [bjanoff1@gmail.com](mailto:bjanoff1@gmail.com). Suggested donation to CAS is \$10 to support our Creative Arts Programs.

*Barbara Janoff Ph.D. is retired from the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York in Manhattan, where she taught writing and literature. Her poetry and essays have appeared in a number of journals, including Communication Arts, Women's Work: The Journal of the Columbia College Women's Center and the Berkshire Review.*



*Photograph by Adolfo Felix on Unsplash*

The next Photography Workshop will also take place on Monday, October 21st, at 7:00 PM. Participants in the workshop can submit any images they would like discussed, regardless of subject matter or content, using phone or camera. They can also share their screen with the group. These workshops are stand-alone sessions, open to all. Please RSVP to [arthurhillman54@gmail.com](mailto:arthurhillman54@gmail.com). Suggested donation to CAS is \$10 to support our Creative Arts Programs.

*Photographer and printmaker Arthur Hillman has been exhibiting his prints for more than 60 years. He has delivered a variety of lectures and presentations on photography and printmaking, juried many exhibits, and was a founding member of the Berkshire Photography Group. He is Professor Emeritus, Photography, Printmaking and Design, Bard College at Simon's Rock.*



*Photograph by Sid Verma on Unsplash*



## October Jahrzeits

*Much of our experience of divine goodness, grace and love has come to us through those whose lives have touched our own.*

	Hebrew Date	Original Date
Masato Mitsuda	Tishrei 01 5768	9/13/2007
Diana Fisher Berkowitz	Tishrei 03 5778	9/23/2017
Matilda Radin	Tishrei 03 5754	9/18/1993
Bruce Budnick	Tishrei 04 5777	10/6/2016
Stanley Bloom	Tishrei 08 5764	10/4/2003
Sara Brook	Tishrei 10 5773	Yom Kippur
Anna Schwartz	Tishrei 10 5723	10/8/1962
Seymour Isserson	Tishrei 18 5747	10/21/1986
Mark Cohen	Tishrei 20 5778	10/10/2017
Nettie Eisenstein	Tishrei 20 5769	10/19/2008
James Mitsuda	Tishrei 22 5769	10/21/2008
William Pozefsky	Tishrei 23 5707	10/18/1946
Joseph Richter	Tishrei 25 5722	10/5/1961
Harry Aaron Orenstein	Tishrei 25 5757	10/8/1996

## October Donations

**In memory of Beatrice Guralnick**  
Joan and Dan Burkhard

**In memory of Masato Mitsuda**  
**In memory of James Mitsuda**  
Louise and Arthur Hillman

**In memory of Bud Elliott**  
Michele Waldman

**In memory of my parents, Marty and Esther**  
**In memory of my grandpa, Joseph Karelitz**  
Deborah Slater

**In honor of Rabbi Barbara Cohen**  
**and her Café Kehillah**

**For our new Memorial Board**  
Barbara Barron

**In support of our Elul Celebration**  
Alison Adams-Weinberg

### **In support of the Creative Arts Workshops**

Barbara Barron (Photography)  
Ross Bettinger (Memoir)  
Caroline Forsman (Memoir and Photography)  
Bruce Frishkoff (Memoir)  
Linda Geffin (Memoir)  
Arthur Hillman (Memoir)  
Barbara Janoff (Photography)  
Linda Josephs (Memoir)  
Carol Killian (Memoir)  
Michele Waldman (Photography)

### **General donations**

Stuart Greenberg  
Carol Noble  
Marie Rudden  
Richard Stanley



Community Event

**October 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**Marking One Year** 

## **Community Commemoration**

**Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00 pm**  
**Knesset Israel**



**Join the Berkshire Jewish Community for an evening of stories, music, poetry, and prayer to commemorate the terror attack of October 7.**

**Security measures will be in place. Presented in partnership with all Berkshire Jewish community organizations.**

**REGISTER AT [JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG](https://JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG)**

**Livestream available at [knessetisrael.org/livestream](https://knessetisrael.org/livestream)**

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